

## Support for Pay Equity: H.B. 5386

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Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is *Lauren Gray* and I live in Bridgeport, CT. I stand in support of H.B. 5386: An Act Concerning Various Pay Equity and Fairness Measures.

Almost every single employer I have had has asked me about previous salary. It makes me nervous to state what I had been previously paid because I am not sure if the salary they are about to propose is a fair salary or if I will be paid equally to my male and female coworkers.

Every woman should receive equal pay for every dollar paid to male coworkers. Equal pay for equal work matters. Our economy loses when females, as most decision makers when buying items locally, are not paid equally.

Additionally,

1. *Women in Connecticut, especially women of color, earn significantly less than their male coworkers.*
  - Women in Connecticut are paid \$0.79 to every dollar paid to men.
  - African American women in CT are paid 58 cents, Latinas are paid 47 cents and Asian women are paid 80 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
  - Research shows that one year after college graduation, women are earning an unexplained 7% less than their male counterparts.
2. *Without action, the wage gap in Connecticut is not projected to close until 2058*
  - CT has a key opportunity to demonstrate out leadership on equal pay as a competitive advantage.
  - Massachusetts, Delaware, Oregon and California, as well as several cities including New York City, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Washington D.C., have taken steps to combat the gender wage gap by prohibiting employers from inquiring about a potential employee's salary history.
3. *Lower wages for women hurt Connecticut's economy.*
  - Women lose \$418,800 over the course of a 40-year career to the wage gap.
    - Career losses for black women: \$840,040
    - Career losses for Latinas: \$1,043,800
  - Women's earnings are critical to economic growth: if women received equal pay, the United States economy would produce additional income of \$512.6 billion.
4. *Reliance on salary history in the hiring process contributes to the gender wage gap.*

- By using a person's salary history to set future pay, employers allow past discrimination to drive hiring and pay decision. This forces women, especially women of color to carry pay discrimination with them from job to job.
- Women are more likely to be in female dominated professions that pay low wages simply because women are the majority of workers in that occupation. Salary histories perpetuate the systemic undervaluing of women's work.
- Women are still more likely than men to reduce their hours or leave the workforce to care for children or other family members. Asking about salary histories harms women seeking to re-enter the workforce if their last salary no longer reflects their current qualifications.

I strongly support H.B. 5386. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to ensure that women in Connecticut are paid what they deserve.

Thank you,  
Lauren Gray